

Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
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President's Message

We have had a productive year! In the first quarter of the year, the Indiana Legislature convened for a long, budget session. IASWCD requested that the Legislature increase the \$1 million CWI line item to \$15.2 million. Testimony was provided in front of both the House and Senate financial committees, as well as with help from Districts visiting the statehouse. While we fell short of increasing CWI funding, we did raise the awareness of Districts. This allowed us to present in front of the Rural Caucus regarding agricultural impacts on water quality, and we were able to get two SWCD appointments to the summer Stormwater Task Force. This next session will focus on continuing the momentum thus far and encouraging Districts to reach out to their legislators.

The IASWCD hosted a December Legislative Training session in downtown Indianapolis that included an advisory panel and tips on reaching out to your legislators. Upcoming District statehouse visits are now being scheduled through Joe Schmees, Executive Director, IASWCD.

In August, IASWCD, along with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, hosted four Summer Trainings for District Staff and Supervisors throughout the state. We had 198 attendees.

This annual report will be posted on the IASWCD after the 2020 annual conference. Please contact the association with any questions.



Roger Wenning
 IASWCD Board President

2019 IASWCD Board of Directors & Staff

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2019 Annual Report



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF
 soil and water conservation
 DISTRICTS

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) operates at a state level, on behalf of the 92 Indiana Districts, to promote and enhance conservation. This is accomplished through legislative advocacy, public outreach, and supporting our member SWCDs in their local work.

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership organization that supports the efforts of the soil and water conservation districts 460 supervisors and more than 200 staff in 92 local offices through training, communications, contribution agreements, partnership building, and advocacy.

IASWCD Accomplishments in 2019 Working for our Members

Communications & Outreach

IASWCD used various communication tools to inform our members and the public about soil and water conservation issues. 2019 Accomplishments:

- Delivered 24 “Conservation Insight” eNewsletters with timely conservation information.
- Communicated District successes and accomplishments through media and news releases.
- Continued updates of the resource-packed association website at www.iaswcd.org.
- Promoted District and partner job vacancies in the eNewsletters and on the website
- Promoted outstanding conservation efforts through various awards:
 - River Friendly Farmer - 47 recipients
 - Friend of Conservation Awards (2) –Zimmer Tractor (Franklin County); Arrow Head Country RC&D (Pulaski County)
 - Conservation Farmer of the Year – Michael & Kelsey Gettelfinger (Washington County)
 - District Showcase Awards – Knox, Pulaski, Parke and Vermillion SWCDs
 - SWCD Supervisor of the Year – Announced at Awards Luncheon at Annual Conference
- Communicated news releases and other important natural resource information to a broader audience through posts on Twitter and over 190 Facebook posts.
- Provided registration and administrative support for all ICP training events in 2019.

- Contracted for a Coordinator for the ICP Pathway to Water Quality committee and successfully completed the 27th year of PWQ at the Indiana State Fair. Collaborated with ICP partners to collect financial support for the next five years for PWQ Coordinator.
- Conveyed important NRCS information to Districts through a contribution agreement for communication services.

Policy & Advocacy

IASWCD works with legislators during session for SWCD conservation policy and funding. 2019 Accomplishments:

- Maintained the Clean Water Indiana general fund appropriation budget while advocating for a large increase; including meeting with individual legislators. IASWCD testified in front of the House Ways and Means and Senate Appropriations Committees.
- Updated SWCDs on a weekly basis during the 2019 legislative session.
- IASWCD sponsored the Rural Caucus at the Statehouse, and the Executive Director presented on Agricultural Water Quality during the 2019 legislative session.
- Shared a booth space with NRCS during Ag Day at the Statehouse, sponsored by the Indiana Family of Farmers.
- Assisted Districts with Statehouse visits.
- Four SWCD supervisors advocated for Indiana’s conservation issues with all Congressional members during a visit to Washington, DC in March.
- Actively participated as a steering committee member on the Indiana Conservation Alliance.
- Communicated with all Congressional offices on the importance and meaning of conservation technical assistance.
- Successfully advocated for District representation on the legislative Storm Water Task Force committee. The IASWCD Executive Director and an SWCD Supervisor were appointed by the Governor to fill the two agricultural seats on the committee.
- IASWCD President represented Districts on a round table discussion with the USDA Secretary Perdue.

Capacity Building

IASWCD works with partners to build the capacity of soil

and water conservation districts to carry out locally led conservation. 2019 Accomplishments:

- Continued the NRCS Program Support agreement for Districts to provide administrative and technical assistance with Farm Bill programs. Over \$750,000 total in payments were made to Districts under this agreement in 2019. This agreement ended at the end of 2019, and IASWCD and NRCS have been actively discussing the future needs of District support for Farm Bill programs.
- Successfully garnered \$26,250 in sponsorships for the 2020 SWCD Annual Conference to help offset conference fees.
- Provided a Supervisor Scholarship Conference Assistance Program, worth over \$5,000, to attend the 2020 SWCD Annual Conference.
- Partnered with ISDA to provide information and training at four regional meetings. The Executive Director presented at each meeting regarding the work of IASWCD, and how dues are used to support that work. The presentation was later recorded and now available on the IASWCD website.
- IASWCD staff provided updates to the Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) at IDEA Director Meetings and participated in the IDEA Fall Conference.
- Continued to collaborate with NACD to implement technical assistance grant opportunities for Districts.
- Continued collaboration with The Nature Conservancy to hold a cross-state border meeting with Indiana and Illinois Districts in the Wabash River basin to determine barriers to soil health adoption.
- Provided liability insurance coverage for Districts that provides a savings of over \$1,000 per District.

Leadership

The IASWCD Board of Directors and its staff strive to provide consistent and quality leadership for Districts. 2019 Accomplishments:

- Hosted the 76th Annual Conference of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, January 13-15, 2019. Over 450 conservationists were in attendance.
- Represented SWCDs at the National level on various NACD committees, at the NACD Annual Meeting, Summer Meeting, and Executive Directors’ Meeting.

- Represented SWCDs on the State Technical Committee, Indiana Conservation Partnership Leaders; State Soil Conservation Board, Indiana Agriculture Nutrient Alliance, Indiana Family of Farmers, and other state level committees.
- Represented SWCDs on the Indiana Woodland Steward Institute committee.
- Worked with NRCS and other ICP partners on new Cooperative Agreement/MOU language, and collected and aggregated comments from SWCDs and provided to NRCS.

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)

The IASWCD helps to administer the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative. 2019 marked the 10th year of this program, overseen by the Oversight Committee. Highlights in 2019 include securing bridge funding from Purdue University for the Agronomist position, hiring one new Program Manager, and working with IANA through a SARE grant to adapt the CCSI curriculum toward an ag retailer audience. For more updates on CCSI, please view additional provided publications.

IASWCD Fiscal Summary

